

Message Text

SECRET

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

FROM ATHERTON USDEL NO. 38

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJ: OTHER ITEMS FROM MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
- KAMEL FEBRUARY 1

REF: (A) CAIRO 3466, (B) STATE 225103

1. AT THE CLOSE OF OUR DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, I ASKED FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL IF I MIGHT COMMENT ON TWO OTHER ITEMS THAT HE HAD BROUGHT UP IN OUR MEETING THE PREVIOUS DAY (CAIRO 3466).

2. THE FIRST WAS KAMEL'S COMMENT TO ME INDICATING EGYPTIAN UNHAPPINESS OVER WHAT THE EGYPTIANS BELIEVED WAS OUR ACTION IN DISCOURAGING THE EUROPEANS FROM MAKING ANY DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST. I EXPLAINED THAT I HAD NOT COMMENTED ON THIS AT THE TIME BECAUSE I WANTED TO CHECK WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND CONFIRM MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS WAS NOT CORRECT. I SAID I HAD SENT A CABLE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE JANUARY 31 MEETING AND HAD GOTTEN
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BACK A VERY PROMPT AND CATEGORICAL REPLY CONFIRMING THAT WE HAVE NOT TRIED TO DISCOURAGE THE EUROPEANS FROM MAKING A DECLARATION. WE HAVE TOLD THEM THAT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO MAKE A DECLARATION IS ENTIRELY THEIR BUSINESS. I SAID WE HAD REITERATED THIS IN A CONVERSATION IN THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE DANISH AMBASSADOR LAST WEEK. KAMEL EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THIS INFORMATION

AND REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE THAT EGYPT ATTACHES TO THE EUROPEANS' MAKING A STATEMENT.

3. I SAID THE OTHER ISSUE WAS KAMEL'S COMMENT ABOUT AMERICAN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND INDIA. I SAID THERE WERE TWO POINTS I WANTED TO MAKE IN THIS CONNECTION. THE FIRST IS THAT WE THINK THAT DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION OF ISRAEL IS NOT HELPFUL; ISOLATION MAKES THE ISRAELIS MORE RIGID, NOT MORE FLEXIBLE. THE SECOND POINT IS THAT DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SINAI II AGREEMENT, THE MATTER OF EGYPT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES WAS DISCUSSED. IF MY RECOLLECTION WAS CORRECT, THESE DISCUSSIONS RESULTED IN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY AND SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT MAKE AN EFFORT TO PREVENT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES. ISRAEL FEELS THERE WAS A FIRM COMMITMENT BY THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT NOT TO INTERFERE. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THE EGYPTIAN INTERPRETATION WAS NOT THAT PRECISE, BUT THERE WAS SOME UNDERSTANDING THAT THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ACTIVELY TRY TO PREVENT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. EILTS SAID HIS RECOLLECTION WAS THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT ACTIVELY OPPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. KAMEL SAID THAT IS THE AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING. EILTS REPLIED NO, THAT WAS THE SECRET

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COMMON UNDERSTANDING. I POINTED OUT THAT THE SINAI II DISCUSSIONS WERE IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE AFRICAN STATES BUT OF COURSE THE PRINCIPLE WOULD APPLY TO INDIA OR OTHER STATES.

4. KAMEL SAID EGYPT THINKS THAT IF A COUNTRY LIKE INDIA ESTABLISHES RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, THE ISRAELIS WILL EXPLOIT THIS AND WILL TAKE AN EVEN HARDER STAND. OF COURSE ONCE AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON PEACE, KAMEL SAID, EGYPT WILL HAVE NO OBJECTION TO INDIA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. KAMEL REITERATED, HOWEVER, THAT EGYPT FEELS THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND INDIA, OR OTHER COUNTRIES, IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, WOULD ONLY MAKE ISRAEL MORE INFLEXIBLE.

5. IN THE MIDST OF THIS EXCHANGE, KAMEL INTERJECTED THAT "WE BELIEVE BEGIN IS NOT THE MAN WITH WHOM WE CAN REACH ANY NORMALIZATION; DEFINITELY WE BELIEVE IN THAT." KAMEL WAS VISIBLY AGITATED AS HE SAID THIS, AND HE PUT CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS ON HIS WORDS. HE DID NOT MENTION THE SUBJECT AGAIN. THIS RATHER SUDDEN OUTBURST COULD BE

INTERPRETED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCUSSION AS MEANING
THAT THE EGYPTIANS DO NOT FEEL THEY CAN MAKE CONCESSIONS
TO BEGIN. BUT ANOTHER INTERPRETATION CANNOT BE RULED
OUT, I.E., THAT KAMEL SEES NO POSSIBILITY OF EGYPT AND
ISRAEL REACHING AN AGREEMENT WHILE BEGIN IS PRIME MINISTER.
THAT WOULD BE A DISTURBING CONCLUSION, BUT NOT A
SURPRISING ONE TO JUDGE BY REMARKS SADAT HAS MADE
RECENTLY ABOUT BEGIN.
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